



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

May 13, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Present

Mike Henson, Commissioner

Christopher Spicer-Hankle, Commissioner

Lara Versari, Commissioner

Nancy Bacci, Deputy Director

Members of the Public Present

Amy Henson

Sidd Pattanayak

Derrick Rice

Immigrant Stories project

Commissioner Lara created and shared a google spreadsheet containing the contact information of several immigrant-owned restaurants. With the Overview Letter finalized, it can now be translated into Portuguese, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Nepalese. Commissioner Lara will also begin translating the letter into Portuguese and Spanish. She will work with the Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs (SOIA) to finalize her translations and to request their assistance in supplying the other two translations. Any financial compensation to SOIA for the translation work can be addressed at the next monthly meeting.

The commission discussed the best approaches for inviting the immigrant restaurant-owners to participate. A personal delivery method is ideal, and follow-up can occur via email, if the commission has an email address for the owner.

The group agreed that coordination through the shared spreadsheet, which contains space record who is contacting each restaurant-owner, is important, in order not to duplicate efforts.

HRC response to Anti-Asian Hate Incidents

Commissioner Christopher attended the online bystander training provided by ihollaback.org. He also shared several links responding the increase in anti-Asian sentiment.

The commission discussed the need to improve its page in the city's website, using as an example the page of the Disabilities Commission. The motion was made and approved to add a "Resources" tab on the HRC's page, where several of Christopher's links will be added (such as, the bylaws stated in Article V). He will forward the links to Director Nancy, who will work with the webmaster of the city's website to ensure that the new tab and links conform with similar pages in terms of formatting.

The group acknowledged the need for a process for adding new links to the "Resources" tab. An initial process will include a standing topic at monthly meetings to review new links for inclusion and having Commissioner Christopher act as a "clearinghouse" to receive new links and see them through the review process.

The commission discussed another potential tab for reporting complaints. The group agreed that much more deliberation is needed before implementing such a tab. Things to consider include the following.

- Should there be a form for complaints to come directly to the HRC?
- Should the form created by the SPD also be available on the tab?
- What process will be in place for complaints that come directly to the HRC?
- What expectations should residents who file a complaint have?

New business: Mid-June Outdoor Rally

Commissioner Christopher shared a document to guide discussion about organizing a rally event in June. The major hurdle to such planning is the need for permit, which could take 4-6 weeks to be processed.

Volunteer Derrick expressed reservations about the commission organizing a rally event without already participating in similar events that already occur, such as those by Just Us Somerville. The commission acknowledged those concerns, but nonetheless sees value in organizing its own event.

Commissioners will look into scheduling a supplemental meeting to generate more progress toward organizing such an event.